

Ashe Juniper Natural Area

Ten-Year Area Management Plan

FY 2017-2026



Lisa B. Allen

Forestry Division Chief

11-7-16

Date

Ashe Juniper Natural Area Management Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

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SOUTHWEST REGION

RCT Chair

 10/19/16
Signature Date

FORESTRY DIVISION

Forest Management Chief

 11/2/16
Signature Date

OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Ashe Juniper Natural Area, # 8601
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1985
- **Acreage:** 31 acres
- **County:** Stone
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Statements of Purpose:**
 - A. Strategic Direction**

Manage for woodland and cliff natural communities with emphasis on xeric species, such as Ashe juniper, which dominates the site.
 - B. Desired Future Condition**

The desired future condition of Ashe Juniper Natural Area (NA) is high-quality dry limestone/dolomite woodland and dry limestone/dolomite cliff communities.
 - C. Federal Aid Statement**

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

- I. Special Considerations**
 - A. Priority Areas:** None
 - B. Natural Areas:** Yes. The area was nominated as a natural area for the Ashe juniper-dominated, dry dolomite woodland and cliffs that occur over much of the area.
- II. Important Natural Features and Resources**
 - A. Species of Conservation Concern:** None observed.
 - B. Caves:** None
 - C. Springs:** None
 - D. Other:** This area occurs within in the Ozark Highlands section, White River Hills subsection, and White River Dolomite Glade/Oak Woodland Rugged Hills and Knobs. A high quality dry limestone/dolomite woodland natural community occurs on this property and supports an almost solid stand of Ashe juniper trees, some over 500 years old.
- III. Existing Infrastructure**
 - One gravel road
- IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations**
 - A. Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations:** None

- B. Federal Interest:** Federal funds may be used in the management of this land. Fish and wildlife agencies may not allow recreational activities and related facilities that would interfere with the purpose for which the State is managing the land. Other uses may be acceptable and must be assessed in each specific situation.
- C. Easements:** A road easement passes diagonally from southeast to northwest through the area.
- D. Cultural Resources Findings:** None
- E. Endangered Species:** None observed.
- F. Boundary Issues:** None

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Monitor woodland stands for diseases and harmful insects such as emerald ash borer and gypsy moth.
- 2) Control invasive vegetation on the area such as sericea lespedeza, musk thistle, tall fescue, Johnson grass, and reed canary grass.

Management Objective 1: Monitor woodland for insect and disease outbreaks.

Strategy 1: Monitor woodland stands for insects and diseases as regular maintenance and boundary work are performed. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Control insect or disease outbreaks, as is appropriate. (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Monitor area for invasive plant species.

Strategy 1: Regularly monitor the area for invasive plant species as maintenance and boundary work are performed. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Use the appropriate management techniques to control invasive species as they appear. (Forestry)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Table Rock Lake is located approximately 100 feet west of Ashe Juniper NA. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' property that surrounds the lake separates the natural area from the lake.

Management Objective 1: Maintain forested cover over the entire 30 acres of the Ashe Juniper NA.

Strategy 1: All management activities on Ashe Juniper NA should maintain a forested cover over the entire area and follow the *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines for Lands and Waters Managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation* (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2009). (Forestry)

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Improve educational and interpretive opportunities.

Management Objective 1: Improve educational and interpretive opportunities.

Strategy 1: Communicate to the public compatible recreational opportunities (e.g., using brochures, Atlas database, and area interpretive sign). (Forestry/Wildlife/Outreach and Education)

Strategy 2: Communicate to teachers, students, scout groups, and youth groups the uniqueness of the area to facilitate as a possible destination for ecology classes, school programs, and workshops. (Forestry/Wildlife/Outreach and Education)

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Development in the form of resorts, condominiums, and lake homes is occurring around Table Rock Lake and the Ashe Juniper NA.
- 2) Maintain the road easement to allow for use by private landowners who live at the end of California Lane.
- 3) Facilitate good relationships with neighboring landowners.

Management Objective 1: Prevent encroachment and trespass on the area.

Strategy 1: Annually maintain boundaries by replacing signs and repainting boundary lines with blue paint. (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Maintain the portion of the road easement that is located on Missouri Department of Conservation (Department) property.

Strategy 1: Grade road, apply gravel, and trim branches as needed. (Forestry)

Management Objective 3: Facilitate a good working relationship with neighboring landowners.

Strategy 1: Work with neighbors to minimize any boundary, trespass or road issues. (Forestry/Protection/Design and Development)

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

All strategies for this management plan are considered ongoing.

APPENDIX

Area Background:

Ashe Juniper NA is located in Stone County, about 8 miles east of Blue Eye, Missouri. The Department purchased this area in 1985 and manages it to protect the unique dry limestone/dolomite woodland and the species of Ashe juniper that dominates the area.

The most interesting component of this 31-acre area is the old growth Ashe junipers, with many trees over 500 years old. This area contains the best example of high-quality dry limestone/dolomite woodland dominated by the old growth Ashe juniper within the White River Hills section. Other overstory species include chinquapin oak, post oak, and eastern red cedar. Fragrant sumac, Carolina buckthorn, gum bumelia, and smoke tree are common in the shrub layer. Ground floras include bottlebrush blazing star, palafoxia, and Arkansas beard tongue.

Twenty-four acres of the original 31 acres purchased in 1985 were designated as a natural area in 1986. The remaining 7 acres of Department-owned land, along with 18 acres of land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers along the shoreline of Table Rock Lake, was designated as a natural area in 2002.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	% of Area
Woodland	30	97
Road right of way	1	3
Total	31	100

Public Input Summary:

The draft Ashe Juniper Natural Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period May 1–31, 2016. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from two respondents (Appendix A). The Ashe Juniper Natural Area Planning Team carefully reviewed and considered these ideas as they finalized this document. A brief summary of public input themes, including how they were incorporated or why they were not, can be found below. Rather than respond to each individual comment, comments are grouped into general themes and are addressed collectively.

Department responses to themes and issues identified through the Ashe Juniper Natural Area public comment period

Wonders what changes are planned for this area.

This is the first area plan that has been written for this natural area. This draft plan makes no significant changes to the current management of the area.

Suggests adding a parking lot.

Construction of a parking lot on this area would be very difficult due to the fact that the entrance road is located on a narrow rock shelf with a steep slope. Construction would require blasting of rock to create a parking lot, destroying some of the existing Ashe juniper tree habitat and would be expensive to accomplish.

Supports preservation of the area.

The goal is to sustain the Ashe Juniper Natural Area in its current state.

References:

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2009). *Watershed and stream management guidelines for lands and waters managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation*. Jefferson City, MO: Missouri Department of Conservation.

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Vicinity Map

Figure 3: Aerial Map

Additional Appendices:

Appendix A. Ashe Juniper Natural Area Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

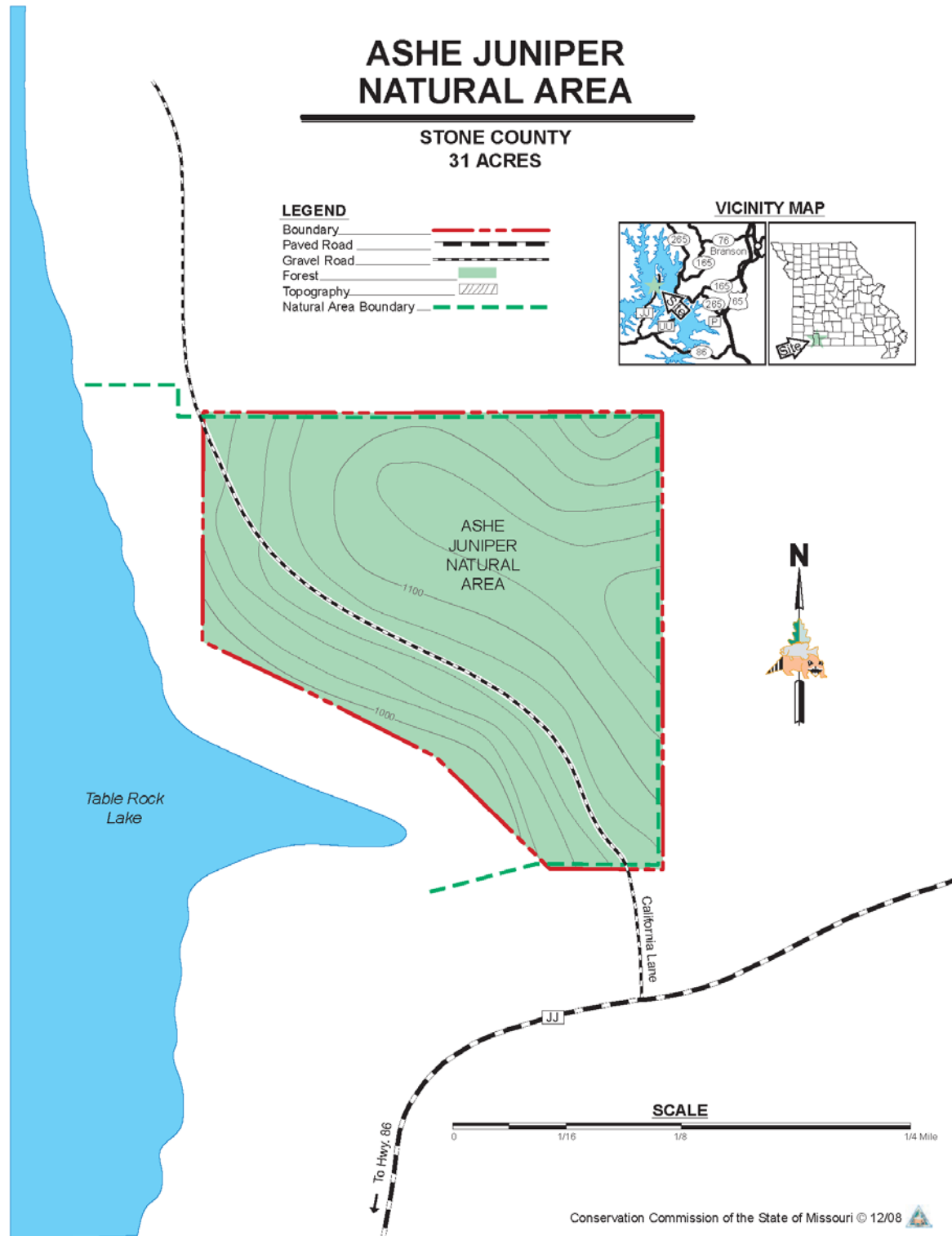


Figure 2: Vicinity Map

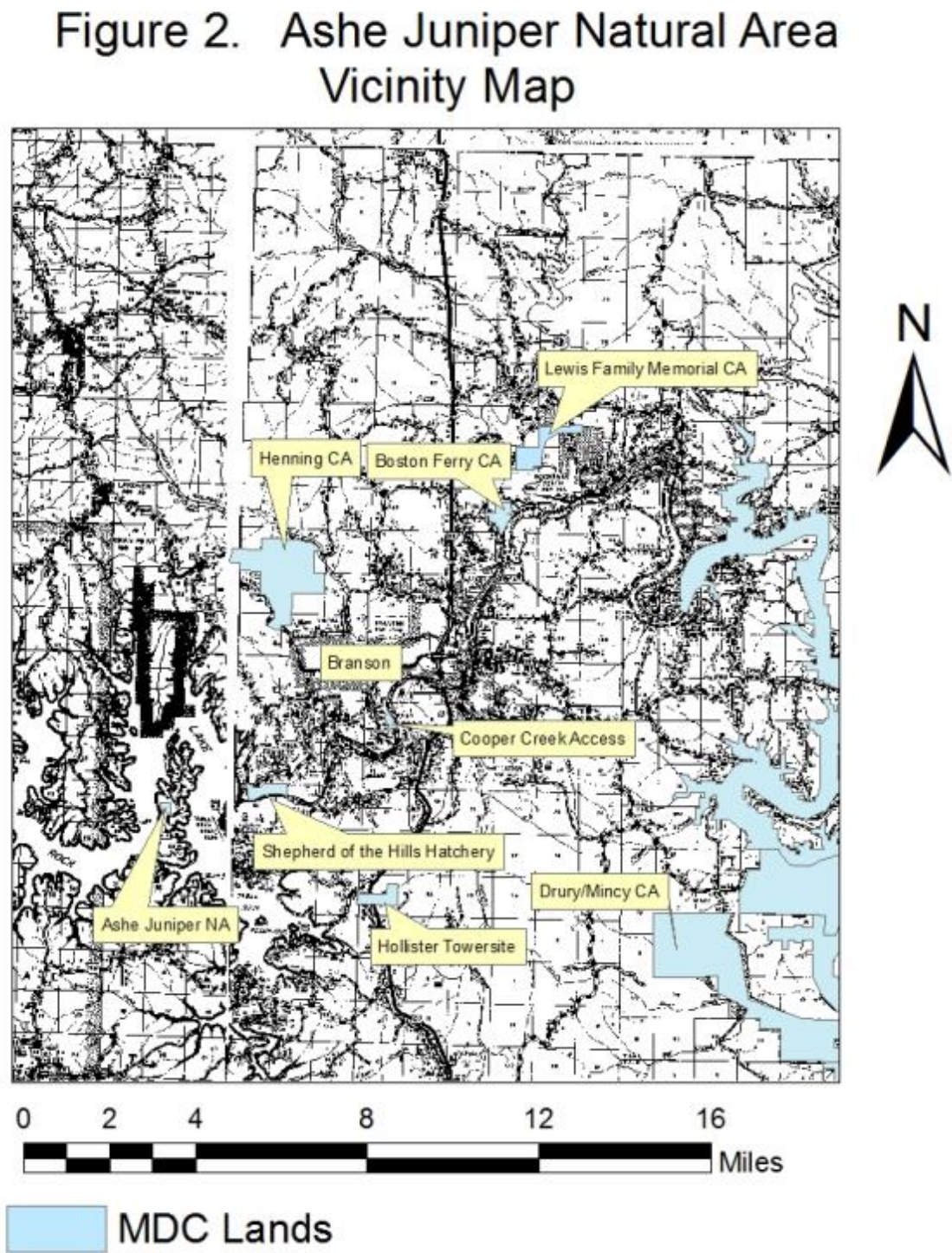


Figure 3: Aerial Map

**Figure 3. Ashe Juniper Natural Area
Aerial Photograph**



Appendix A. Ashe Juniper Natural Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (May 1-31, 2016):

(Hardcopy comment received 5/23/2016): I am curious about the plan for this adjacent property to my 40a to the east.

- 1.) What plan is presently in place?
- 2.) What change do you contemplate?

(Hardcopy Comment Received 5/27/2016): Hope you continue to preserve this area. Would like to have a parking area. People ask us where the parking area is.